

Message Text

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ACTION NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 W
-----082863 122226Z /73
O 122203Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7237
INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

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EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM ATHERTON

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, JO, US
SUBJ: MEETING WITH KING HUSSEIN AUGUST 12

1. SUMMARY: IN MY TALKS IN AMMAN WITH KING HUSSEIN LATE AFTERNOON AUGUST 12 AND EARLIER IN THE DAY WITH ABDUL HAMID SHARAF AND ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ABU ODEH, I DID MY BEST TO DISPEL CONCERN OVER THEIR PERCEPTION THAT THERE HAS BEEN EROSION IN THE U.S. POSITION ON A MIDDLE EAST PEACE SETTLEMENT. ALL THREE VOICED THIS CONCERN, AND HUSSEIN SPOKE MORE FRANKLY THAN I HAVE EVER HEARD HIM OF HIS APPREHENSION THAT THE U.S. APPEARED TO BE PULLING BACK FROM ITS POSITION ON MEANING OF RESOLUTION 242 CONVEYED TO HIM OVER THE YEARS SINCE 1967. HE SAID AT ONE POINT THAT THESE PAST MONTHS HAVE BEEN "THE MOST DISTRESSING OF MY LIFE." I ASSURED THEM THAT OUR POSITIONS HAVE NOT CHANGED AND THAT THE POSITIONS WE WILL TAKE AT CAMP DAVID IN SEPTEMBER WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH THOSE THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY HAVE CONVEYED TO HUSSEIN. HIS DEMEANOR IMPLIED THAT
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HE WILL BELIEVE IT WHEN HE SEES IT. WHAT HE SAID, HOWEVER, WAS THAT HE WELCOMES THE CAMP DAVID MEETING, ADDING THAT EVEN IF IT BRINGS NO PROGRESS IT WILL BE USEFUL AS LONG AS IT PRODUCES A U.S. POSITION COMPATIBLE WITH RESOLUTION 242. I EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR FRIENDS IN THE ARAB WORLD EXPRESSING PUBLICLY THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S INITIATIVE. I SAID WE WERE

VERY PLEASED OVER FAHD'S STATEMENT, WHICH HAD BEEN HELPFUL AS WELL IN MAKING THE SAUDI POSITION CLEAR IN THE U.S., AND I HOPED HUSSEIN WOULD GIVE CONSIDERATION TO FINDING A WAY FOR JORDAN, TOO, TO SHOW ITS SUPPORT. (I HAD EARLIER SAID TO SHARAF THAT JORDAN'S REACTION WILL BE CLOSELY WATCHED IN THE U.S.) HUSSEIN REITERATED THAT HE HOPED FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE CAMP DAVID MEETING AND, TURNING TO SHARAF STID "WE WILL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO". HUSSEIN, HENCE, DID NOT TIP HIS HAND ON QUESTION OF JORDANIAN PUBLIC SUPPORT. HE MAY WISH TO CONSULT HIS CABINET ON ISSUE, AND WE WILL JUST HAVE TO WAIT AND SEE HOW THIS MATTER DEVELOPS. IN ALL THESE MEETINGS I WAS ACCOMPANIED BY SUDDARTH AND KORN. END SUMMARY.

2. QUESTION OF JORDANIAN PERCEPTION OF AN EROSION OF U.S. POSITION CAME UP AND WAS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH IN MY MORNING MEETING WITH SHARAF, WHO EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT U.S. POSITION ON THE WEST BANK AND GAZA WAS VERY CLOMPZQ TO THE BEGIN PLAN. I TOLD SHARAF I THOUGHT THERE HAD BEEN MISUNDERSTANDING IN BOTH JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA OF WHAT I HAD SAID IN MY PREVIOUS VISIT IN JULY. MY PURPOSE HAD BEEN TO SET OUT OUR THOUGHTS COMING OUT OF THE LEEDS TALKS ON THE EGYPTIAN AND ISRAELI WEST BANK/ GAZA PROPOSALS; IN DOING THIS IT WAS IN NO WAY MY INTENTION TO IMPLY THAT WEST BANK/GAZA ARRANGEMENTS SHOULD BE MADE WITHOUT PRIOR AGREEMENT ON A BROAD FRAME-
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WORK OF PRINCIPLES COVERING ALL THE MAJOR ISSUES, WITHDRAWAL, PEACE, SECURITY AND THE PALESTINIAN PROBLEM. I ASSURED BOTH SHARAF AND ABU ODEH THAT THIS IS OUR GOAL AND THAT OUR POSITIONS REMAIN AS THE PRESIDENT AND THE SECRETARY HAD EARLIER STATED THEM IN TALKS WITH KING HUSSEIN. WITH BOTH ABU ODEH AND SHARAF I MADE A STRONG PITCH FOR SOME PUBLIC EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FROM JORDAN FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CAMP DAVID INITIATIVE. I SAID THIS WAS NOT ONLY IMPORTANT FOR PRESIDENT CARTER AND SADAT, BUT FOR U.S.-JORDANIAN RELATIONS.

3. IN THE MEETING WITH HUSSEIN, WHICH LASTED ABOUT 40 MINUTES, I COVERED ALL THE POINTS IN THE TALKING POINTS YOU APPROVED FOR MY STOPS IN SAUDI ARABIA AND JORDAN. I EMPHASIZED IN PARTICULAR THAT THE PRESIDENT FELT WE ARE AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST (HUSSEIN AGREED), THAT AN EFFORT WAS NEEDED TO BREAK THE IMPASSE AND THE U.S. WAS THE ONLY ONE THAT COULD DO SO. I EXPLAINED AT LENGTH WHY DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS ARE NECESSARY. I SAID THAT OUR OBJECTIVE AT CAMP DAVID WILL BE TO GET AGREEMENT ON A BROAD FRAMEWORK OF PRINCIPLES. WE CANNOT PROMISE SUCCESS BUT AT LEAST BY THE TIME THE CAMP DAVID MEETING ENDS U.S.

POSITION WILL BE CLEAR. I EXPLAINED THAT THE PRESIDENT INTENDS TO MAKE AN ALL-OUT EFFORT AND IS READY TO CONTINUE THE TALKS AT CAMP DAVID AS LONG AS NECESSARY. I ALSO ASSURED HUSSEIN THAT THE CAMP DAVID MEETING WAS OUR OWN IDEA AND THAT WE HAD NOT DISCUSSED IT WITH ANYONE ELSE. BEGIN AND SADAT FIRST LEARNED OF IT WHEN THE SECRETARY ARRIVED IN JERUSALEM AND ALEXANDRIA (SUDDARTH HAD TOLD ME THE KING MIGHT BE SENSITIVE ABOUT THE ABSENCE OF ANY .

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FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO IMMEDIATE
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ADVANCE CONSULTATION.)

4. I SAID I REALIZED THAT THE IMPRESSION EXISTED IN THE ARAB WORLD THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN EROSION IN OUR POSITION. THE SECRETARY WANTED ME TO ASSURE HIS MAJESTY THAT IS NOT THE CASE. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT A FRAMEWORK OF BROAD PRINCIPLES HAS TO BE THE STARTING POINT, AND THE IDEAS AND SUGGESTIONS THAT WE WILL PUT FORWARD AT CAMP DAVID WILL BE CONSISTENT WITH THOSE THE SECRETARY AND THE PRESIDENT HAVE DISCUSSED WITH HUSSEIN. I POINTED OUT THAT THE CAMP DAVID INITIATIVE WAS AN ACT OF GREAT COURAGE ON THE PART OF THE PRESIDENT, JUST AS WAS SADAT'S ACCEPTANCE OF THE INVITATION, AND THE PRESIDENT DESERVES THE BROADEST POSSIBLE SUPPORT. I SAID I HOPED JORDAN WOULD CONSIDER WAYS IT COULD SHOW ITS SUPPORT.

5. HUSSEIN THANKED ME FOR COMING AND SAID THAT, SPEAKING AS A FRIEND OF THE U.S. AND IN SPIRIT OF OUR RELATIONS, HE HAD TO SAY THAT THE RECENT PERIOD HAD BEEN A VERY

CONFUSING ONE. HUSSEIN SAID WHAT HE HAD HEARD NOT ONLY AFTER THE LEEDS CONFERENCE BUT BEFORE THAT TIME HAD CAUSED HIM TO HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT THE STEADFASTNESS OF THE U.S.

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IN 1967 THE U.S. SPOKE OF ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL WITH MINOR BORDER MODIFICATIONS. NOW WE HEAR OF A 5 YEAR PERIOD "THAT WOULD LEAD TO WE DON'T KNOW WHAT" AND THE POSSIBILITY OF ISRAELI FORCES STAYING ON THE WEST BANK WITH JORDAN PROVIDING A "COVER" FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES. HUSSEIN SAID U.S. IDEAS DID NOT APPEAR TO BRING IN THE PALESTINIANS SUFFICIENTLY, AND HE STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF INVOLVING THE PALESTINIANS FULLY IN THE SETTLEMENT EFFORT. HUSSEIN SAID IN THE POST 1967 PERIOD THE U.S. AND JORDAN HAD DIFFERENCES ON ONLY TWO ISSUES, JERUSALEM AND THE NEED FOR MINOR BORDER MODIFICATIONS TO BE ON A RECIPROCAL BASIS. IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, DIFFERENCES SEEMED TO HAVE MULTIPLIED.

6. IN SUM, HUSSEIN SAID, HE FELT THERE HAD BEEN A "VERY SERIOUS EROSION IN THE U.S. POSITION" AND THAT IT HAD DAMAGED THE U.S. IMAGE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. AT ONE POINT HE SAID THE PAST FEW MONTHS HAD BEEN "THE MOST DISTRESSING OF MY LIFE." (COMMENT: HUSSEIN NEVER ALLUDED TO HIS DESIRE TO VISIT THE U.S., BUT I SUSPECT THIS ALSO WAS IMPLIED IN THIS REMARK.) HOWEVER, HUSSEIN SAID HE WAS GLAD TO HAVE OUR ASSURANCES THAT U.S. POSITIONS REMAIN UNCHANGED AND WELCOMED THE PRESIDENT'S CAMP DAVID INITIATIVE. EVEN IF CAMP DAVID DOES NOT BRING PROGRESS, HUSSEIN SAID, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT AND HELPFUL IF IT PRODUCES A U.S. POSITION COMPATIBLE WITH RESOLUTION 242. "WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING THE BEST POSSIBLE NEWS FROM CAMP DAVID" HUSSEIN ADDED. I SAID I HAD HAD A GOOD TALK WITH PRINCE FAHD AND WE HAD BEEN VERY MUCH HEARTENED AND PLEASED BY FAHD'S STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CAMP DAVID INITIATIVE. I NOTED THAT FAHD'S STATEMENT HAD ALSO HELPED A GREAT DEAL IN THE U.S. IN DISPELLING DOUBTS ABOUT SAUDI ARABIA'S POSITION.

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TURNING TO SHARAF, HUSSEIN SAID "WE WILL SEE WHAT WE CAN DO."

7. AT END OF THIS PART OF CONVERSATION, I REMINDED HUSSEIN THAT DURING MY PREVIOUS VISIT I HAD SAID IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO KNOW MORE PRECISELY WHAT JORDAN

NEEDS IN A STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES TO BE ABLE TO JOIN NEGOTIATIONS. IT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL TO HAVE HIS THOUGHTS ON THIS BEFORE SEPTEMBER 5. I SUBSEQUENTLY UNDERLINED THIS POINT WITH SHARAF. BOTH WERE NON-COMMITTAL.

8. WITH THIS THE CONVERSATION ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE EFFORTS ENDED. THERE FOLLOWED A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF LEBANON, WHICH IS BEING REPORTED SEPARATELY.

9. AS REGARDS THE QUESTION OF A JORDANIAN STATEMENT OF SUPPORT FOR THE PRESIDENT'S CAMP DAVID INITIATIVE, HUSSEIN DID NOT TIP HIS HAND IN ANY WAY. LATER IN THE EVENING ABU ODEH REMARKED THAT HE DID NOT THINK WE SHOULD EXPECT ANYTHING "YET". SUDDARTH'S GUESS IS THAT HUSSEIN WILL WAIT TO CONSULT HIS CABINET BEFORE FORMALLY DECIDING ANYTHING, AT LEAST FOR APPEARANCES SAKE. SUDDARTH

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, SUMMIT MEETINGS, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 aug 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978AMMAN06532
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: P850093-2458
Format: TEL
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780869/aaaacfsx.tel
Line Count: 242
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a7040e64-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1754338
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEETING WITH KING HUSSEIN AUGUST 12
TAGS: PGOV, PDIP, MPOL, PBOR, US, JO, EG, IS, (HUSSEIN I)
To: STATE SS MULTIPLE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a7040e64-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014